

11/5/01

PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of	:	Dieter MAIER and Hermann SCHALL
Serial no.	:	
Filed	:	
For	:	CHILD SAFETY SEAT
Group Art Unit	:	3636
Examiner	:	Milton Nelson, Jr.
Docket	:	BSG P45AUSP1



The Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, D.C. 20231

SUBMISSION OF CERTIFIED COPY

Dear Sir:

A claim for priority is hereby made under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 119 for the above-identified United States Patent Application based upon British Patent Application No. 9923868.5 filed October 9, 1999. A certified copy of said British application is enclosed herewith.

In the event that there are any fee deficiencies or additional fees are payable, please charge the same or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account (Account No. 04-0213).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael J. Bujold".

Michael J. Bujold, Reg. No. 32,018

Customer No. 020210

Davis & Bujold, P.L.L.C.

Fourth Floor

500 North Commercial Street

Manchester NH 03101-1151

Telephone 603-624-9220

Facsimile 603-624-9229

E-mail: patent@davisandbujold.com

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The Patent Office
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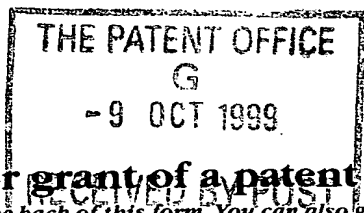
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7. If this application is divided or otherwise derived from an earlier UK application, give the number and the filing date of the earlier application	Number of earlier application	Date of filing (day / month / year)	
8. Is a statement of inventorship and of right to grant of a patent required in support of this request? (Answer 'Yes' if:	Yes		
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Description

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Claim(s)

Abstract

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11. I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

A. HOLLINGHURST, Agent for the Applicants

Signature



Date 8 October 1999.

12. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom

A. HOLLINGHURST 02392 539523

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CHILD SAFETY SEAT

This invention relates to a child safety seat for use in a vehicle.

5 It is well known for a child safety seat to rest on a vehicle seat and to be secured thereon by the corresponding vehicle seat belt. The disadvantage of this arrangement is that, even if the vehicle seat belt is pulled very tight during installation, the resilience of the belt, will permit undesirable movement of the child
10 seat relative to the vehicle in the event of sudden deceleration, for example, during an accident. In order to overcome this disadvantage, it has been proposed to provide vehicle seats with standard anchorage units at agreed locations for engagement by releasable connectors which are attached to the child seat structure by rigid links. Such
15 anchorage units will be referred to hereinafter as "standard anchorage units".

The invention relates to a child safety seat of the type comprising a child seat structure having a base
20 support surface for resting on a vehicle seat, a back support surface for abutting against the seat back of said vehicle seat, a rigid link projecting from the base between the first and second support surfaces, and a releasable connector mounted on the rigid link for engagement with a
25 standard anchorage unit associated with the vehicle seat.

EP-A-0952032 discloses such a child safety seat for use with two standard anchorage units located near the rear edge of the vehicle seat cushion and the bottom of the vehicle seat back. This arrangement is subject to the
30 disadvantage that, in the event of an accident, the child seat tends to rotate about the standard anchorage units, compressing the front part of the vehicle seat cushion and allowing undesirable forward movement of the head of a child occupant of the child seat. The present invention
35 aims to provide a child safety seat in which this disadvantage is mitigated.

According to the invention, in a child safety seat

of the type described above the rigid links are pivotally attached to the child seat structure at a pivot location above the base support surface.

Operation of this arrangement differs from the prior art in that the centre of gravity of the combination of the child seat structure and the seat occupant does not rotate about the standard anchorage units at a constant radius. Instead both the front and rear edges of the base support surface are pressed downwards into the vehicle seat cushion simultaneously. This results in a reduction in the distance of this centre of gravity from the anchorage units and therefore a corresponding reduction in the rotational moment exerted by the inertia of the child seat.

Preferably, each pivot link is L-shaped with a first limb carrying the corresponding connector and a second limb having its free end pivotally attached to the child seat structure. In normal use, the first limb lies in a rearward continuation of the plane of the base support surface and the second limb is generally parallel to the back support surface.

The height of the pivot location above the base surface is at least 30mm so as to be greater than the reduction of the thickness of the vehicle seat cushion when it is fully compressed.

An embodiment of the invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a vehicle seat equipped with standard anchorage units;

Figure 2 is a schematic side view of a known child seat installed on the vehicle seat shown in Figure 1 with a test dummy on the child seat;

Figure 3 is a side view similar to Figure 2 showing the child seat and dummy in an initial phase of movement after sudden deceleration of the vehicle;

Figure 4 is a schematic side view, similar to Figures 2 and 3 after a second phase of deceleration; and

Figures 5, 6 and 7 are side views, similar to Figures 2, 3 and 4 respectively showing a child seat in accordance with the invention on the vehicle seat shown in Figure 1.

5 Figure 1 shows a vehicle seat 10 equipped with two standard anchorage units according to the first proposal. The seat 10 comprises a seat cushion 12 and a backrest 14. The two standard anchorage units comprise transversely
10 extending rods 16 and 18 which are accessible through openings 20 and 22 in the bottom of the backrest and which are rigidly secured to the frame (not shown) of the seat 10.

Figure 2 shows a known child seat 30 having a base support surface 32 resting on the seat cushion 12 of the
15 vehicle seat 10 and a back support surface 34 abutting against the backrest 14. A rigid link 36 projects from the junction between the base support surface 32 and the back support surface 34 and is rigidly secured to the child seat 30 so as to be fixed parallel with the base support surface
20 32. A releasable connector 38 engages with the standard anchorage unit 16. A similar releasable connector (not shown), on another rigid link, engages with the other standard anchorage unit 18. The seat is occupied by a test dummy 40 having a reference marking 42 on the side of its
25 head. The dummy 40 is retained in the child seat 30 by a conventional harness (not shown).

If the vehicle seat 10 is subject to sudden deceleration in the normal direction of travel, the child seat 30 tends to pivot in the counter-clockwise direction
30 (as viewed in Figures 2 to 4) about the standard anchorage units 16 and 18. This results in compression of the part 44 of the vehicle seat cushion 12 which is under the front edge of the base surface 32 and pivotal movement of the child seat 30 through an angle β as shown in Figure 3.
35 During the next phase of movement, the torso of the dummy 40 pivots about its pelvis through an angle α as shown in Figure 4, resulting in a total forward movement through an

angle δ (equal to $\alpha + \beta$). This movement allows the head of the dummy to come into contact with a reference surface 46 positioned in front of the vehicle seat 10, thus exceeding the extent of undesirable forward movement.

5 Figure 5 shows a child seat 50 in accordance with the invention, having support surfaces 32 and 34 similar to the correspondingly numbered support surfaces of the child seat 40. However, the releasable connector 38, which engages with the standard anchorage unit 16 is mounted on
10 the end of one limb 52 of an L-shaped link, the other limb 54 of which has its free end attached by a pivot connection 56 to the child seat 50 at a location adjacent to the back support surface 34 above the base support surface 32 at a distance equal to the length of the limb 54. A similar
15 link (not shown) is provided for the connector which engages with the other standard anchorage unit 18.

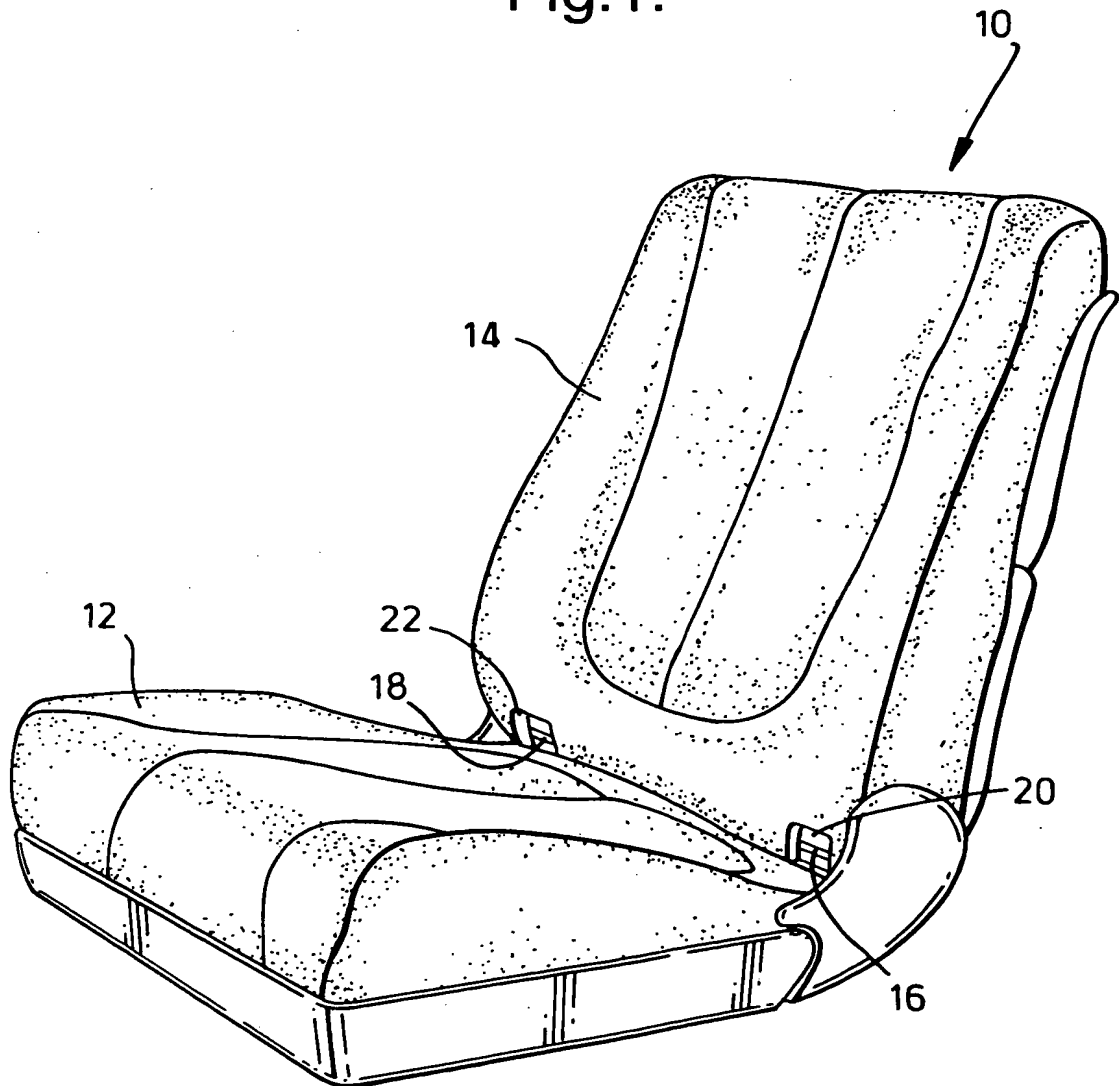
 Under normal conditions, the link 52, 54 is retained in the orientation shown in Figure 5 by a latch (not shown), such as ball catch which is designed to
20 release when a load is applied. During the first phase of forward movement in the event of sudden deceleration, the link 52, 54 pivots in the counter-clockwise direction about the standard anchorage unit 16. The pivot joint 56 allows the base support surface 32 of the seat 50 to remain
25 generally parallel to the vehicle seat cushion 12, compressing it substantially uniformly, as shown in Figure 6. Consequently, the effective range of angular movement of the child seat 50 about the standard anchorage unit 16 is limited to ϵ , which is substantially less than β . The
30 compression of such a large area of the vehicle seat cushion 12 provides a greater resistance against downward movement of the child seat 50, with the result that the front edge of the base support surface 32 is higher in Figure 6 than in Figure 3.

35 During the subsequent phase of movement, the torso of the dummy 40 pivots about its pelvis through the angle α , as before. The total angular movement θ of the dummy 40

is less than the ~~angle~~ δ , as shown in Figure 7. Consequently, the total forward movement of the head of the dummy 40 is less, leaving a clearance a from the reference surface 46, as shown in Figure 7.

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Fig.1.



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Fig. 2

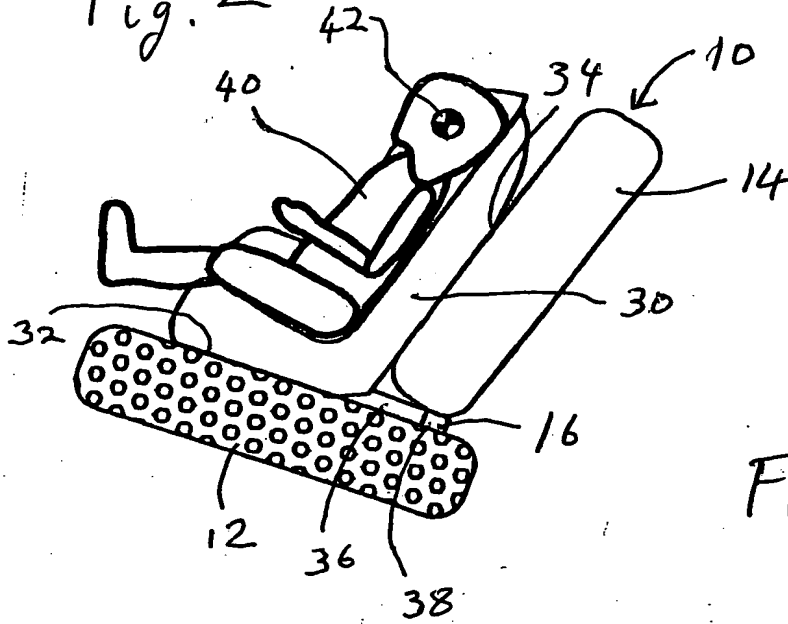


Fig. 3

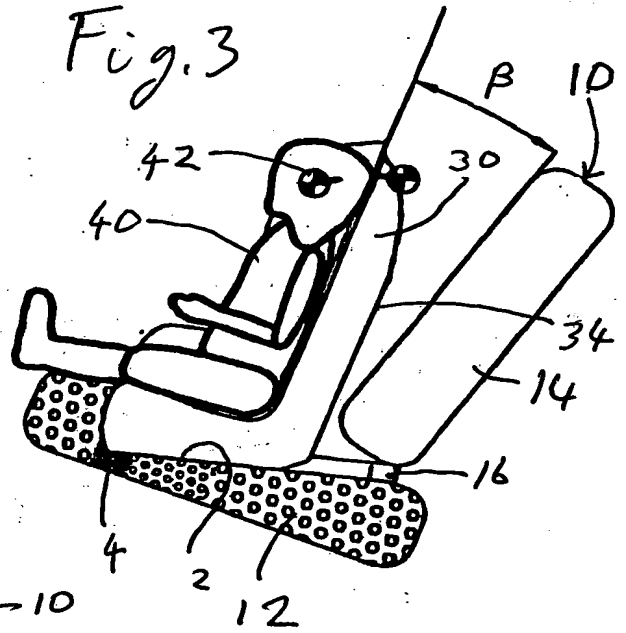
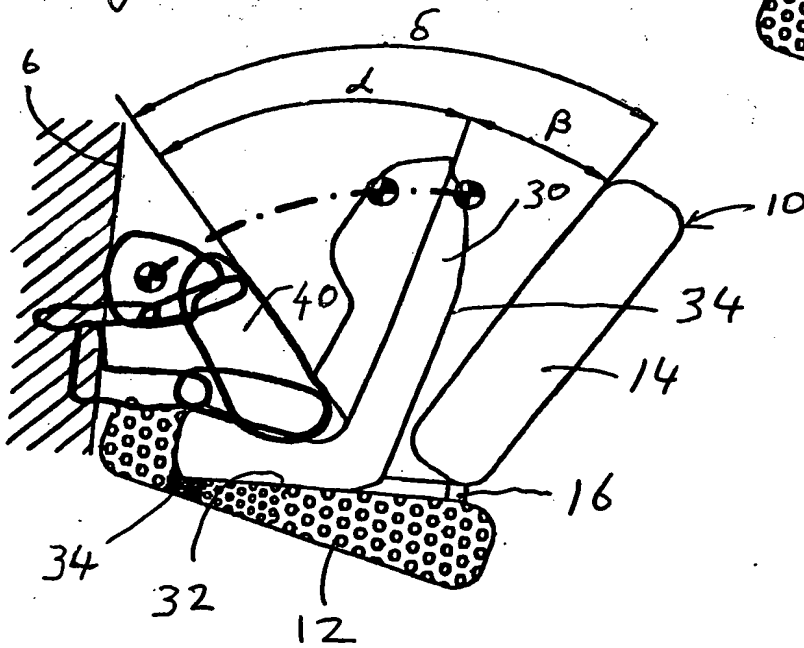


Fig. 4



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Fig. 5

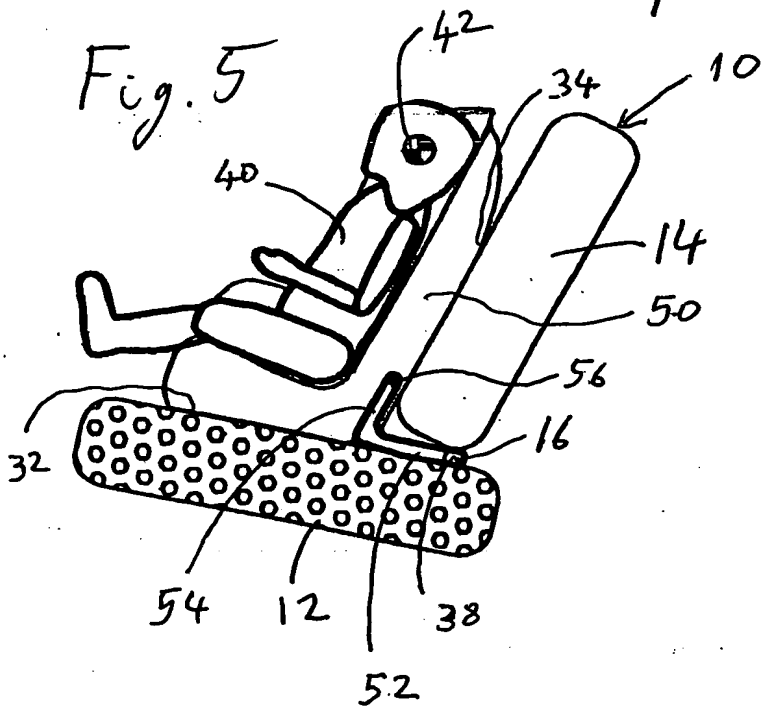


Fig. 6

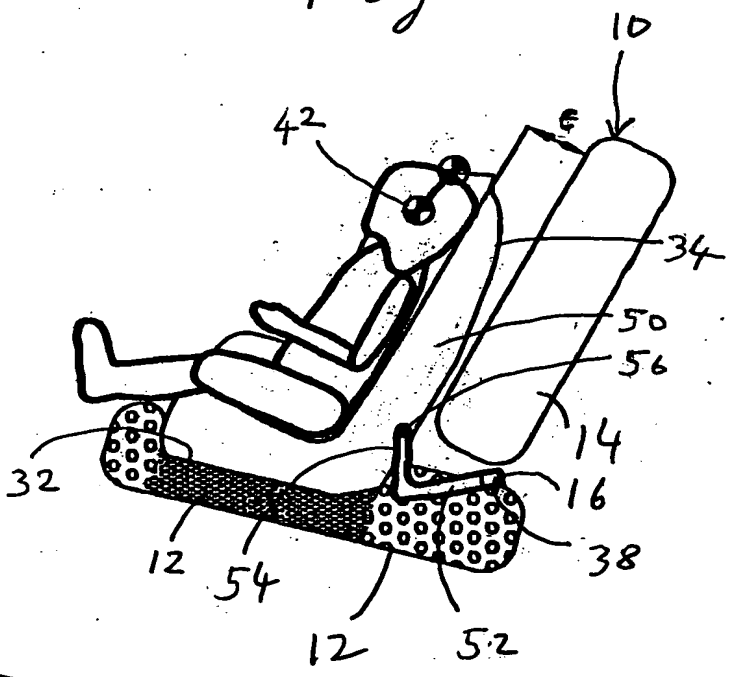
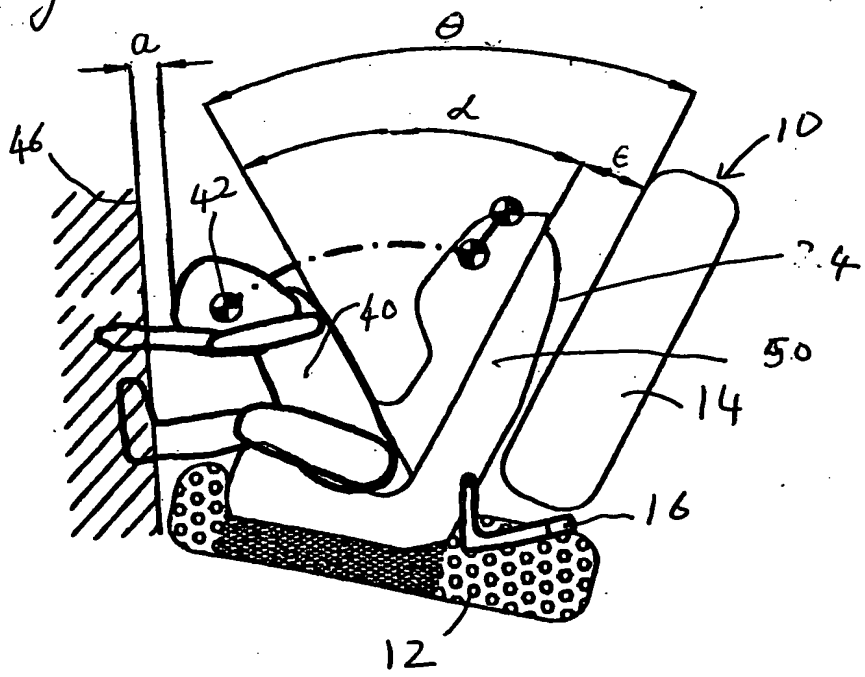


Fig. 7



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